

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-10

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 SY-05 AID-05 /068 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9641

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4092

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: MARCH 6, THE 65TH DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

A. PHNOM PENH 4026 B. PHNOM PENH 3041

1. SUMMARY: THE KC CONTINUED TO FIRE 105MM HOWITZER SHELLS AND 107MM ROCKETS AT AND ON POCHENTONG AIRFIELD BUT THE AIRLIFT HAS PROCEEDED DESPITE THIS SHELLING. ONE DC-8 WAS DAMAGED BY 105MM FRAGMENTS MARCH 5 BUT MANAGED TO AKE OFF AND RETURN TO SAIGON SAFELY. THE 105 HOWITZER FIRE HAS NOT BEEN SILENCED. THE KC HAVE CUT A ROAD IN THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH AND FANK, FEARING AN ENEMY PENETRATION, HAS RUSHED REINFORCEMENTS TO THE LOCATION. SEVERAL KHMER NAVY CONVOYS SUCCESSFULLY RESUPPLIED NEAK LUONG AND THE POSITION SOUTH OF IT, ALTHOUGH ONE PATROL BOAT WAS SUNK IN THE PROCESS. FANK NOW REPORTS KILLING 300 KC IN ITS SUCCESSFUL OPERATION TO RELIEVE A 3RD DIVISION BATTALION TWO DAYS AGO. THE KC ARE PRESSURING ANOTHER FRIENDLY POSITION IN DETERIORATING BATTAMBANG PROVINCE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE KC FROM MORNING TO MID-AFTERNOON MARCH 6 FIRED A REPORTED SEVEN 105 MM HOWITZER SHELLS AND THIRTEEN
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107MM ROCKETS ON POCHENTONG, ALL OF WHICH LANDED IN ONE

AREA SOUTH OF THE RUNWAY AND WEST OF THE DC-8 UNLOADING RAMP. (THE FACT THAT ALL THE ROUNDS LANDED IN THE SAME PLACE MAY MEAN THAT THE ROUNDS REPORTED BY FANK AS 107MM ROCKETS MAY ALSO BE THE MORE ACCURATE 105MM SHELLS). IN ADDITION, THERE WERE ANOTHER TEN CONFIRMED 107MM ROCKETS, ONE IN THE CITY, NINE AROUND POCHENTONG. THE AIRLIFT IS PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE DESPITE THE SHELLING, BUT ON MARCH 5 ONE DC-8 WAS STRUCK BY 105MM SHRAPNEL. ALTHOUGH DAMAGED, IT TOOK OFF AND RETURNED TO SAIGON. THUS FAR, FANK AIR AND ARTILLERY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SILENCE THE 105MM HOWITZER FIRE AND THE GROUND OPERATION LAUNCHED TODAY IN THE TUOL LEAP AREA WHERE THE FIRING IS COMING FROM HAS NOT MADE DEFINITIVE PROGRESS.

3. THE KC HAVE CUT ROUTE 51 WHICH RUNS WEST FROM ROUTE 5 THROUGH THE 7TH DIVISION AREA OF OPERATION NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH. THE FANK HIGH COMMAND, FEARING A DEEPER PENETRATION TOWARD THE CAPITAL, HAS SENT A BATTALION AND A PLATOON OF ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AS REINFORCEMENTS. IN THE RICE-RICH NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE OF BATTAMBANG, WHERE THE MILITARY SITUATION HAS BEEN DETERIORATING, THE KC HAVE PLACED ANOTHER FRIENDLY POSITION SOUTHWEST OF BATTAMBANG CITY UNDER PRESSURE.

4. THE SITUATION IN THE BANAM-NEAK LUONG AREA SHOWED LITTLE CHANGE. KHMER NAVAL CONVOYS SUCCESSFULLY RE-SUPPLIED NEAK LUON AND THE POSITION SOUTH OF IT ALTHOUGH ONE PATROL BOAT WAS SUNK.

5. FANK HAS REPORTED THAT 300 KC WERE KILLED IN THE SUCCESSFUL MARCH 4 OPERATION IN WHICH RELIEF FORCES LINKED UP WITH AN ISOLATED 3RD DIVISION BATTALION (REF B).
DEAN

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